

Message Text

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11

ORIGIN SCCT-01

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 PRS-01 H-02 CIAE-00

NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-03 INR-07

L-03 NSC-05 PA-02 SP-02 SS-15 DHA-02 SCA-01 SCSE-00

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DRAFTED BY S/CCT: EWSCHAEFER:NWH

APPROVED BY S/CCT: RAFAREY

NEA/P: MR. VAN ORDER

S/PRS: MR. FUNSETH (INFO)

H - MR. FLATEN (INFO)

EUR/P - MR. JERABEK (INFO)

S/S-O: J. HOGAN-ON

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O 120310Z JUL 75

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

USCINCEUR

SECDEF

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY ANKARA

UNCLAS STATE 164712

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING -- ABDUCTION OF
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COLONEL MORGAN

1. FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS
FROM DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN'S NOON PRESS BRIEFING, JULY 11,

1975.

Q. THERE IS A STORY ON THE FBIS -- I FORGET WHO IT IS ATTRIBUTED TO -- SAYING THAT THE U.S. HAS AGREED TO THE RANSOM DEMAND IN BEIRUT AND STUFF WILL BE DISTRIBUTED BY THE BEIRUT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

A. AS FAR AS THE UNITED STATES BEING INVOLVED IN ANY DISTRIBUTION OF FOODSTUFFS, THAT IS A FALSE REPORT.

Q- DID THE UNITED STATES PROVIDE THE FOODSTUFFS THAT ARE BEING DISTRIBUTED, NO MATTER WHO BY?

A. NO.

Q. DID THE UNITED STATES ARRANGE FOR PRIVATE SOURCES TO PROVIDE THE FOODSTUFFS BEING DISTRIBUTED?

A. NO.

Q. IS THIS A LEBANESE DECISION? IS THAT WHAT YOU ARE SAYING?

A. AS FAR AS I UNDERSTAND, YES.

Q. DID THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT PROVIDE THE FOODSTUFFS.

A. I DON'T KNOW.

Q. DID YOU AGREE TO THE DISTRIBUTION?

A. NO, WE HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH THAT.

Q. DO YOU KNOW WHO DID?

A. I UNDERSTAND FROM PRESS REPORTS IT WAS THE BEIRUT CHAMBER OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY THAT IS DISTRIBUTING IT.
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THAT IS ALL I HAVE ON IT.

Q. DO YOU KNOW OF ANY OTHER THINGS THAT WERE DISTRIBUTED BY THE BEIRUT CHAMBER?

A. I JUST DON'T KNOW.

Q. DO YOU KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THE TWO SYRIANS THAT WERE SUPPOSED TO HAVE COME TO BEIRUT TO PLAY A CERTAIN PART IN THIS?

A. ALL I KNOW IS WHAT I HAVE HEARD ON THE RADIO AND READ IN THE PRESS.

Q. BOB, ARE YOU SAYING THAT THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT HAD NO PARTICIPATION OR KNOWLEDGE IN THIS DISTRIBUTION OF TEN TONS OF FOOD AND CLOTHING IN BEIRUT WHICH ARRIVED IN TWO AMERICAN AIRPLANES YESTERDAY?

A. I AM NOT AWARE OF ANY REPORT OF FOODSTUFFS ARRIVING IN AMERICAN AIRPLANES. WHAT I AM SAYING IS THAT THE UNITED STATES HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH THE DISTRIBUTION.

Q. APART FROM DISTRIBUTION, DID THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH ANY PART OF THIS?

A. I WAS ASKED THAT AND I SAID NO.

Q. YOU KEPT SAYING WITH THE DISTRIBUTION, WHICH IS A SMALL PART OF PAYING OFF A RANSOM.

Q. HAVE YOU BEEN CONSULTED BEFORE?

A. LOOK, ALL I WANT TO SAY ON THIS DELICATE SITUATION, WHICH AFFECTS THE LIFE OF AN AMERICAN CITIZEN, IS THAT OUR EMBASSY IN BEIRUT CONTINUES TO BE IN CLOSE CONTACT WITH THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT, WHICH IS DOING ITS VERY BEST AND EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO BRING ABOUT THE SAFE RELEASE OF COLONEL MORGAN.

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Q. WE HAVE A REPORT FROM BEIRUT SAYING THAT PALESTINIAN COMMANDO SOURCES SAID THAT FOOD AND CLOTHES WERE FLOWN INTO BEIRUT YESTERDAY BY TWO AMERICAN TRANSPORT PLANES. YOU HAVE NO KNOWLEDGE OF THAT REPORT?

A. NO, I DO NOT.

Q. HOW ABOUT THE REPORT THAT HE WAS TO BE RELEASED TODAY?

A. I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING OTHER THAN WHAT I HAVE SEEN IN THE PRESS ON THAT.

Q. I RECALL THAT IN AN EARLIER KIDNAPPING CASE, THE CASE OF MR. PATTERSON DOWN IN MEXICO, THE GOVERNMENT ARRANGED FOR PRIVATE FINANCING TO PAY OFF A RANSOM. WAS THAT DONE IN THIS CASE?

A. I AM NOT AWARE THAT THE REPORT YOU ARE CITING IS TRUE IN THE PATTERSON CASE.

Q. ARE YOU MORE OPTIMISTIC NOW?

A. WE FEEL THE SAME WAY TODAY AS WE DID YESTERDAY ON
THIS CASE. INGERSOLL

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<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

Message Attributes

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Disposition Event:
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Margaret P. Grafeld
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To: BEIRUT
USCINCEUR
SECDEF
CAIRO
DAMASCUS
JIDDA

ISLAMABAD

RABAT

TUNIS

ALGIERS

AMMAN

ANKARA

Type: TE

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